

SECONDARY SCHOOL INJURIES

Do You Know These Facts About School Injuries In Utah?

- ❖ 37% of all injuries in grades 7-12 involve sports.
- ❖ Each day an average of 10 students in grades 7-12 sustain a school-related injury.
- ❖ Each year an average of 2,725 school injuries are reported for grades 7-12.



UTAH SCHOOL INJURY REPORT TREND DATA (1997-2002) GRADES 7-12

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

WHO

Males sustain 63% of reportable* injuries.

WHAT

Fractures are the leading type of school injury meeting criteria (26%). Injuries to the arm and hand account for 35% of injuries.

WHEN

The majority (61%) of student injuries occur during P.E. and other scheduled classes.

WHERE

Nearly half (46%) of all school injuries occur in the gym or on the athletic field. The surface on which most injuries occur is wood (28%).

WHY

- Risk-taking behaviors among students.
- Poor decision-making skills among students.
- Inadequately maintained equipment.
- Inadequate staff training in injury prevention.
- Lack of conditioning.

*All reportable injuries meet the following criteria: Any injury that is severe enough to cause the loss of one-half day or more of school and warrants medical attention and treatment (i.e., school nurse, M.D., E.R., etc.).

“If a disease were killing our children at the rate unintentional injuries are, the public would be outraged and demand that this killer be stopped.”



C. Everett Koop, M.D., Sc.D.
Chmn., Nat'l SAFE KIDS Campaign
Former U.S. Surgeon General

PREVENTION TIPS

- Develop safety rules for school gyms and train students to use equipment properly.
- Ensure that all sports programs include proper physical conditioning, appropriate personal protective gear, adult supervision and enforcement of safety rules.
- Ensure that a physician, trainer, or EMT is present at all interschool sports competitions.
- Provide regular injury prevention training for all school staff.
- Develop, improve and enforce safety policies and practices in shop classes.



SERIOUS SCHOOL INJURIES IN UTAH

The following examples occurred among students in grades 7-12 from 1997-2002. Prevention tips are noted below each incident.

Incident 1: P.E. class was in session on the athletic field while the lawn was being cut with an industrial mower. The mower hit an object in the grass and projected it into the air. The object struck a 9th grade student in the face. The boy suffered a fractured nose and cheek and needed 50 stitches to close the wound. He missed three days of school.

- *Ensure that instruction takes place in a safe physical environment.*
- *Identify and correct any possible hazards.*

Incident 2: A javelin thrown at a track meet struck a 10th grader in the head while he was standing out of bounds. The student was hospitalized with head injuries for 25 days.

- *Ensure that athletic activities take place in appropriate areas that meet safety standards for the designated activity.*

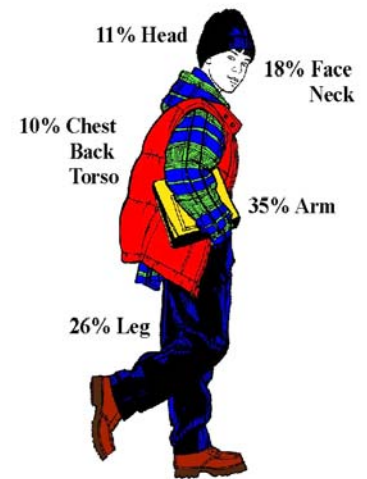
Incident 3: As part of the completion of dares for a school fundraiser, students packed several gallons of ice cream around a fellow 12th grade student. She received medical treatment for frostbite.

- *Review planned activities for potential dangers and promote safety in all school-related events.*
- *Supervise students to ensure their safety.*

Incident 4: A 9th grade boy who had been tuning his bicycle in shop class was testing the bike in a school parking area when he chose to jump off a 3-foot loading dock. He crashed the bike and was treated for scalp abrasions. He missed a half-day of school.

- *Establish and enforce guidelines for classroom instruction.*

Utah **Secondary** School Injuries
By Injury Area, 1997-2002
N= 14,499



PREVENTION TIPS

- Have maintenance staff be on the lookout for melting snow and other spills on floors and clean them up immediately.
- Place non-slip strips on the edges of all stairs.
- Develop policies that prohibit bullying and harassment. Establish a procedure for students to report problems, a process for investigating claims, and consequences for those found guilty.
- Establish an annual "injury prevention week" with school safety fairs, parent workshops and teacher refresher courses.
- Prevent sports injuries by holding practices in the early morning or late afternoon hours, making sure athletes are properly hydrated, and holding 15-minute warm-up sessions before every game or practice, with a cool-down period afterward.

The Importance of Reporting

Utah was one of the first states to develop a standardized method for reporting injuries that occur in school settings. The Student Injury Reporting System (SIRS) tracks injuries that occur while traveling to and from school, during class time, at recess and during all sporting and extracurricular activities.



But because the SIRS is voluntary, not all schools are reporting all injuries. The Utah Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program, which administers SIRS, encourages all schools to take advantage of this important tool. In particular, middle, junior and high school coaches should be especially vigilant about filling out the standardized forms.

"We applaud the many schools that use SIRS consistently," said Alan Edwards, Director of Risk Management for the State of Utah. "The SIRS is the best method we have to track how and why our children are getting hurt," he said. "If we have the data, we can develop prevention programs that will keep our students safer."

For information on SIRS, call (801) 538-6864.